

Matter of Time 05.5 - Just Jory

Mary Calmes

Book 5.50 of A Matter of Time



calibre 0.9.24

Just Jory

by

Mary Calmes

We had been waiting for three hours as the negotiations continued. My ass was numb since I was sitting, along with everyone else, on the cold marble floor. I had my hands on my knees and those PlastiCuffs on my wrists, waiting to hear what the next wave of demands was going to be.

“I’m so dead,” I grumbled, letting my head roll back and clunk against the side of the desk I was close to.

When a couple of people gasped, I understood my mistake.

“No one is going to die,” the gunman, bank robber; whatever he was, however he should have been classified, corrected me.

“Oh, not you,” I shook my head, giving him a dismissive wave even though my hands were both inseparable from one another. “My partner’s outside.”

It took a minute for the wave of surprise to recede so he could talk to me. He even pushed up the ski mask when he did it, rolled it up so I could see his face.

“Oh crap,” I moaned.

“Oh crap what?”

“Are you gonna kill us now?”

“What?” He seemed startled by my question.

“Sam says that the only time guys show their faces to hostages is if they plan to kill you.”

Instantly there was whimpering, crying and breath-catching from all over the room.

“No-no-no,” he soothed me as well as everyone else. “Let’s all just settle down. We don’t plan to hurt anyone as long as the cops outside cooperate with us.”

I squinted at him and he noticed.

“You don’t believe me?”

“No, I just...Sam said and...” I shrugged. “I mean he knows about this kind of stuff.”

“Sam? Who’s Sam?”

“My partner.”

“The one who’s gonna kill you.” He clarified.

I nodded.

Snort of laughter from him. “Lemme get this straight. You’re more scared of your little boyfriend outside than of me, here, in front of you, with a gun?”

“Oh hell yeah,” I almost whined. Just imagining Sam Kage pacing outside in the street was making my stomach flip over. “And he’s so not little.”

There was nothing else to do. The guy in charge, who was standing right in front of me, had asked for some food and a bus to take us all to the airport with him and his partner. It was the same bullshit that all bank robbers did to waste time in real life as well as in the movies. So it was understandable, since we were in a holding pattern with nothing else to do, that he knelt down on one knee, huge ass automatic rifle pointed at my head, and asked me why I was so scared.

“Okay,” I said, scooching up because my ass was falling asleep, wiggling until I was a little more comfortable on the floor of the First Community Bank downtown off Pearson. “See, I was only supposed to be using the ATM outside to make a deposit, but there were no envelopes so I had to come in here to get one and—”

“That’s not what I ask—”

“But the whole time we were driving over here from lunch, Sam was like, ‘Why do you have to do this now, why can’t you just wait until we’re closer to home, why do you have to be so OCD about this kind of crap, why can’t you just—’”

“I still don’t—”

“But I wanted the check in there,” I cut him off. “I need it in case Dylan puts through an order for some printing that we had done and—”

“I want to know why you’re more scared of him than—”

“So,” I interrupted again, glaring that time, “we get here and he’s already annoyed and I promised to be right back out, and since I wasn’t and then the alarm went off and I got stuck in here...dude, I’m so dead, you have no idea.”

“And how does that—”

“I mean, it’s not like he’s gonna shoot me or anything but—”

“Shoot you?”

“Well, yeah,” I squinted at him. “I mean he could if he wanted. He’s a U.S. Marshall and he has this 10mm Smith&Wesson that’ll blow a hole through you as big as a dinner plate.”

His eyes fluttered and I figured he was bored, but I was really worried about the house arrest I was going to have to endure because of this latest debacle.

“I should just run away,” I moaned.

“You—”

“Not that I could. I mean disappearing, changing my name, altering my face... None of that would stop him. If he wanted to find me, he could do it in a heartbeat. He’s got a whole Federal database at his fingertips, for crissakes. I mean, it would be one thing if he was, like, hunting you, for instance,” I said, gesturing at the man squatting in front of me. “That might take him like ten seconds longer, after he ran down all your known associates and all that crap, but he’d find you too. And the man is tenacious! He had to find these drug cartel guys once, and he spent two years in Columbia, but he found everyone, and they’re either dead now or rotting in prison.”

The partner inhaled sharply and I looked up at him.

“Can you imagine? There you are living your life and then, bam,” I yelled. “He just shows up out of the blue and drops the hammer on you. And it’s not like he doesn’t have this mad-crazy temper sometimes, and this revenge streak a mile long. The man is just unstoppable. And you know, I bet some of those guys he busted in South America would have loved to come home to the US. But I know he left them in some cesspool somewhere just so they could get the whole *Midnight Express* experience.”

“Jesus.”

I turned back to the leader with his ski mask up. “In all seriousness, though, he’s not gonna actually shoot me, but I won’t be able to get on the bus with you to, like, wherever you’re going. I mean, he’d either be on it or on top of it or like I said, he’d just shoot you in the head. Sam always says that Kevlar would be fantastic if it came in full body armor. But your neck, and your collarbone, and of course your head...all that’s vulnerable. And he’s like a really good shot, like crazy good, like sniper good. Oh, I know,” I got excited, thinking of a good frame of reference as I smiled at them. “Do you guys watch *Bones*? Like David Boreanaz’s character, like that—he’ll just put a bullet in your brain.”

The first guy, the guy in charge, who no longer had his rifle pointed at me, took a breath. “You’re saying that along with the cops, there’s a U.S. Marshal out there who wants to kill me and my partner?”

“Well, yeah,” I shrugged, lifting my hands. “I mean, you put *PlastiCuffs* on me, which are a bitch to get off, by the way. Like, in the movies people just cut them off with a knife or something, but you can’t. There’s a special tool you have to use to clip them. It’s just as bad as when—and they do this all the time—they have a character flip the safety on a revolver.”

“There’s no safety on a revolver?” The lady beside me asked.

I scoffed at her, shaking my head. “Yeah no, it’s so stupid.”

“Really? I had no idea.”

“And you wouldn’t,” I patted her knee. “Unless you lived with a cop or a guy who knew his guns.”

“Are you married?” She asked me.

I beamed at her. “Yep, have been for awhile. We’re waiting to hear from an adoption agency on a kid right now.”

“Oh,” she cooed.

“Look at me!”

I turned back to the guy who had not pulled his ski mask off.

“You need to talk to your—”

“Did you know that the SWAT guys are all about saving the hostages and just shooting you dead? Sam told me.”

“Serves them right,” the lady beside me said. “I have kids at home.”

“We all do,” the man on the other side of me said. “And I really like the sound of your husband. He sounds like a shoot first, ask questions later kind of guy.”

“Oh no,” I shook my head. “He’s wonderful and kind and loving. It’s just, you know, this is gonna make him psychotic. And he’ll be worried about you guys too, and like I said, his gun is like a cannon and he knows where to aim it.”

I looked back up at the guy standing above me with the rifle.

“Are you okay? You look sort of gray.”

Without warning, he bolted toward the back of the bank and out of sight. His partner, the guy whose face we couldn’t see, yelled for him to stop and then tore after him.

“Now where are they going?” The lady asked.

“I dunno,” I said, leaning forward to try and see.

“My name is Felicia, by the way, Felicia Jones.”

“Jory,” I said, turning my head to smile at her.

“Tony,” the man on my left chimed in.

I looked over at him and grinned. “Great to meet you both. Maybe we should all have lunch sometime when this is over.”

They both agreed that would be lovely, and some other people offered as well.

When my cell phone rang a bit later, I looked over at the counter where it was. The robbers had put them all there when they collected them. I wasn’t sure if I should move or not.

“What do you guys think?” I asked the collective.

Tony shrugged. “I don’t see anybody, I say g’head.”

“You want me to go grab it?” Another guy asked from a few people away from me.

“No, I got it,” I told him, getting up, hearing Sam’s ringtone: Raindrops by Stunt.

Walking to my iPhone with the hot pink metallic case—it needed to be bright, otherwise I lost it—I touched the answer button and then the speaker.

“Jory?” He yelled at me.

“Hi,” I smiled down at the phone because his picture was there, and it was one of many that I loved. He was squinting at me and his brows were furrowed. God, he was cute.

“Hi?” He was annoyed. “What the fuck is going on in there?”

“Not sure,” I said, looking around. “We seem to be alone. Have been for like the last, what,” I asked, my eyes flicking to the others, “five minutes?”

“I say ten,” Felicia offered.

“About that,” Tony agreed.

“Yeah, like ten minutes at least,” I said back into the phone. “I think they might have bailed.”

Heavy sigh. “Have everyone sit down, we’re coming in.”

Of course he was coming in; they’d be lucky if he didn’t kick the door down and lead the way. Who needed a battering ram when you had Sam Kage with you?

“Okay, sitting down.”

Minutes later, watching the SWAT guys come in was ten kinds of awesome. The doors flew apart; five guys rushed in, dropped to one knee, yelled at us to get down, and froze there. The second wave came in and rushed across the room, forming a sort of phalanx around us and then finally, the last guys charged across the room to the other side.

Once everyone yelled the all clear, Sam came charging into the bank and I could tell he was mad, probably because the SWAT commander had made him wait, but when I lifted my hands and waved, I saw him breathe as he charged toward me.

“Oh, Jory, your man is fine.”

“I know, right?” I smiled at Felicia, watching him; the fluid stride, his massive shoulders, his height, all of him strong and virile. He still made me breathless even after so long.

Kneeling down in front of me, hands on my face as he looked me over, I watched his brows furrow. “Are you all right?” He asked, his voice deep and resonant, even lower than normal because he had been scared.

I leaned forward, put my cuffed hands over his head so they were around the back of his neck, and smiled wide. “I’m fine.”

He let out a shaky breath, wrapped me in his arms, and hugged me tight. When he stood up, easily, even with my added weight, I had no choice but to wrap my legs around his waist. Normally he didn’t like public displays of affection, but this seemed all right. He carried me out, one hand on the

small of my back, the other on my ass. He walked me to his monster SUV, a Chevy Suburban, put me in the passenger seat and locked the door.

I tapped on the window, and he rolled it down with the remote control fob thingy in his hand.

“Yes?”

“Don’t say yes like I’m bothering you!”

He was waiting.

I lifted my wrists for him. “Aren’t you going to take these off?”

“You’re kidding, right?” He asked, and the window rolled up between us.

“Sam Kage!” I yelled at him through the glass.

One beautiful copper colored brow rose before he turned and walked away.

By the time he got back, I had eaten the leftovers from lunch and chugged one of the water bottles he kept in the tiny fridge behind the driver’s seat.

“It’s about time,” I groused at him as he got in.

He grunted. “It seems you scared the crap out of the bank robbers with stories about me. They found them ten blocks away in their hotel room, packing.”

“How did they get out?”

“Same way they got in—through some service elevator that leads to the alley.”

I had to process.

“What did you say?”

“I don’t... I didn’t say anything to them. Not really.”

He was squinting again.

“What? I didn’t. I was just worried that you were gonna be pissed at me.”

“I am pissed at you.”

I groaned. “Could you just take these cuff things off already, please?”

He reached into the console between the seats and pulled out the clipper for them. I was free seconds later.

I was massaging my wrists as I turned to look at him. “That was mean.”

“You are a trouble magnet.”

“I am not.”

The look I got was disbelieving.

“I just... Things happen sometimes.”

“Sometimes?”

I shrugged.

“Come here.”

I moved fast because really, any excuse to get into Sam’s lap was one I would take. I wrapped my arms around his neck and stared into his beautiful, smoky blue eyes. He grabbed hold of my ass and yanked me forward, shoving my groin into his rock-hard abdomen.

“I think you made the news,” he grinned at me.

“I did?” That was fun.

He leaned in and I kissed him. My lips melted over his, my tongue took the tour of his hot mouth and mauled him until he finally had to pull away to breathe.

“Why weren’t you scared?” He asked me, panting.

“Because you were right outside. Why would I be scared?”

“What if I couldn’t get to you?”

“You?” I chuckled. “Not be there to save me? Is that even possible?”

“No, it’s not,” he assured me, hand on the back of my head, fisting in my hair as he recaptured my mouth for a second round.

By the time I was squirming in his lap, whimpering with need, we had to move the car and he gently, but firmly, put me back in my seat and pulled the seatbelt around me.

“Hurry up and get home,” I ordered hoarsely.

“I’m hurrying but you—oh,” he suddenly cackled, and I heard the ring on his car phone at the same moment. “Hello?”

Why was he smiling? Why—

“Sam?” came the brisk, no-nonsense tone over the line. “Where—”

“You saw the news,” Sam said, turning to me, his smile out of control as I put my head back and groaned a little too loudly.

“Is that Jory? Jory!”

“It’s not what you think,” I promised my older brother, Dane Harcourt. Sam started chuckling.

“For heaven’s sake, Jory! You’re a trouble magnet!”

And between my brother yelling and my husband waggling his eyebrows at me, I knew it was going to be a long drive home.

“At least you’ll get laid when you get there,” Sam promised me, whispering.

And that was an excellent point.

“Are you listening to me?” Dane was fuming.

Unfortunately, I was.